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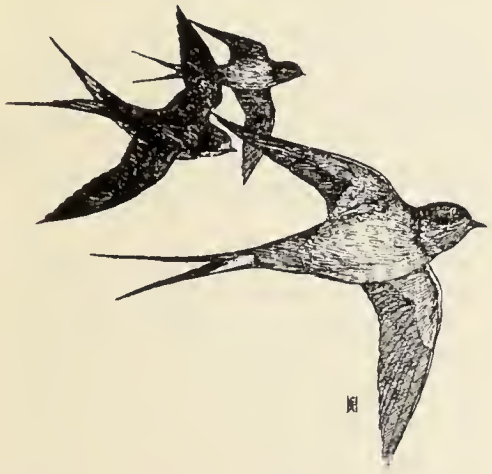
Volume 59 **Berkeley, Calif.** **May 1977** **Number 4**



May Meeting at Tilden Park

Last year's Tilden Park program was one of the most enjoyable meetings we have ever had, with attendance close to 200. Because it was so successful we will repeat it at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 19, at the Tilden Environmental Center.

Come at 6:00 or earlier and bring a picnic supper; greet old friends and make new ones when you take a choice of nature walks. Due to popular demand Dick Anderson will again lead a wildflower walk and Bob O'Brien will take a birding group around Jewel Lake before the meeting.

The program, entitled "Alaska—Wildlands for Tomorrow," will be presented by Phil Schaeffer, manager of the National Audubon Society's Whittell Education Center and Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. This slide show, highlighted by spectacular photography, has been produced by the National Audubon Society in an effort to acquaint those of us in the lower 48 states with the importance of an up-coming Congressional decision. We have a chance to decide the fate of perhaps the grandest landscape left unspoiled in the United States. No opportunity so magnificent will ever be ours again.

March Observations

Don Roberson was ill at presstime and unable to write his column. He will catch up with a two-month report in the June *Gull.*

Field Trips Calendar

For some of the longer trips in the next few months, we will coordinate carpooling on a regular basis. For the trips that are checked (√) arrangements will be made. For each trip we need only three or four drivers from each side of the bay offering to take riders, for carpooling to work spectacularly. If you can't make up your mind until the evening before, that's all right—call anyway; we're all flexible. Kate Partridge, Carpool Coordinator, 849-1951 (home) or 642-3628 (8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)

Thursday, May 5—Mini-trip to Presidio of San Francisco for Hooded Orioles. Details in April *Gull.* Leader: Donna Dittmann (468-2688).

Saturday, May 7—Beaches and ocean south of San Francisco. Details in April *Gull.* Leader: Mike Ozaki (665-3516).

Sunday, May 8—Santa Cruz Mountains to the Pacific. Details in April *Gull.* Leader: Gene Makishima (651-0848, Fremont). (√)

Wednesday, May 11—Mini-trip to Tilden Park Nature Area. All our summer visitors will have arrived by now and started nesting. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the parking lot near the Tilden Park Environmental Education Center. Leader: Ruth Voss (525-8032).

Friday, May 13—Sunol Regional Park. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the ranger station parking lot, bring lunch. Take Interstate 680 south, turn off at Calaveras Road, go left, follow signs to Sunol Park. Four different kinds of wrens nest here; also warblers, orioles. Golden Eagles are often seen. Leader: Ruth Dement (527-7923).

Saturday, May 14—Miwok Trail, Fort Cronkhite. We found many interesting birds along this trail in the fall, and now want to explore the area for spring migrants and nesting birds. Five miles of walking, bring lunch in a knapsack. Drive across Golden Gate Bridge, take Alexander Street exit, turn left after ¼ mile and meet at the entrance to the tunnel at **9:00 a.m.** Leader: Pat Triggs (664-8502). (√)

Sunday, May 15—Mount Saint Helena, Napa County, to find breeding and migrating birds around one of the highest peaks in the Bay Area. We may see Mountain Quail, Poor-will, Pileated Woodpecker, Rufous-crowned, Sage, and Black-chinned Sparrows. Meet at **8:00 a.m. at Kellogg,** six miles north of Calistoga on Hwy. 128. Bring food and drink to carry and be prepared to walk two to three miles. Leader: Mike Parmeter (707-255-6757). (√)

Saturday, May 21—New trails in West Marin. Join us for a leisurely all-day walk (five to ten miles) to enjoy the birds and the views. Bring lunch and liquid to carry. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the parking lot on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Fairfax to organize a car shuttle to our starting point. Leader: Barry Spitz (454-2769, San Anselmo). (√)

Sunday, May 22—A trip for the kinds to Tilden Park Nature Area. Can you tell a robin from a grosbeak? Lucille will try to show you both, and the ducks on the lake, and the animals at Little Farm. Parents also welcome. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the parking lot near the Tilden Park Environmental Education Center. Bring lunch for a picnic at noon. Leader: Lucille Apmann (841-9161 later in evening).

Sunday, May 22—Presidio of San Francisco to see nesting Hooded Orioles and many other birds at this interesting ecological "island" in the city. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at parking lot across from main Muni bus station inside the Presidio at Lincoln Blvd. and Anza (Muni 45, 28, and 43). Lunch optional. Leader: Naomi Svenningsen (584-6233).

Sunday, May 29—Audubon Canyon Ranch at the height of the breeding season. Skip Schwartz, Resident Manager, will introduce you to what's new at this unique preserve. Observe egrets and herons on their nests; walk the trails; see what you can find on Bolinas Lagoon at this time of year—or just browse in the exhibits and bookstore. Maybe some of us "Auduboners" can even help open the eyes of a few newcomers who are expected to visit the ranch this weekend. Meet at **10:00 a.m. at the Canyon Ranch** parking lot, about four miles north of Stinson Beach on Hwy. 1. We'll have **lunch at Five Brooks** trail head, about seven miles north of the ranch, and are planning a walk in that area in the afternoon. Leader: Aileen Pierson (587-4163). (√)

Sunday, May 29—Outer Point Reyes Peninsula. With some luck we may find a few vagrants in breeding plumage (see Joe Morlan's article elsewhere in this issue); it is also a good time for nesting cormorants, murres, oystercatchers. A *fast paced* trip, including some walking. Meet at **6:00 a.m.** *behind* the store in Inverness, on the west side of Tomales Bay, to pool cars as much as possible. Leader: Robin May (845-8800). (√)

Saturday & Sunday, June 11 & 12—Yuba Pass and vicinity. An area exceptionally rich in birds of foothill, mountain, sagebrush and marsh habitats. Early morning walks with emphasis on bird song. There are several Forest Service campgrounds in the area; one of the leaders will be staying at Wild Plum Campground, just east of Sierra City on Hwy. 49 (watch for sign along highway). Motels: Sierra Chalet (916-289-3483) and Buttes Motel (916-862-1151), both in Sierra City. If you want to join us for a reasonably priced dinner Saturday evening to celebrate a special anniversary, call or write Marie (3713 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #33, Lafayette, Calif. 94549). Meet on **Saturday at 7:30 a.m.** at the entrance to Wild Plum Campground **and at 10:00 a.m.** at the Yuba Summit marker on Hwy. 49. From Truckee on Interstate 80 take Hwy. 89 north; eight miles north of Sierraville take Hwy. 49 west. Or take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more picturesque route. Leaders: Beth Snyder (841-1747) and Marie Mans (284-7681). (√)

Wednesday, June 8—Mini-trip to Audubon Canyon Ranch to see the nesting herons and egrets. Meet at the ranch at **10:00 a.m.** You may

observe the rookery from below or walk to the overlook. As a special treat Kathy Kipping, ranch naturalist, will take us to Volunteer Canyon to see the project of the California College of Arts and Crafts. Canyon Ranch is on Hwy. 1 about four miles north of Stinson Beach. For information or rides call Hap Fraser (661-8891) *after June 1.*

Tentative plans are under way for weekend trips to **Lassen National Park** on June 24, 25, and 26, and to **Yosemite high country** at the end of July. There may also be an exploratory trip to the San Joaquin Valley in mid-June, depending on effects of the drought over the next several weeks.

FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

OTHER TRIPS TO REMEMBER—Phil Schaeffer's three-day trip to Eagle lake, June 3-5, still has openings, as does our Monterey pelagic trip on June 5. See pages 39 and 42 of the April *Gull* for details.

Thanks to All Field-Trippers

First, thanks to Eric Caine, Co-Chairman of the 1976-77 Field Trips Committee until February when he moved to Modesto. As a new member of the Society he contributed many refreshing ideas and suggestions, and organized several of our best trips. Equal thanks go to the committee members who all played a part in our successful program: Chris Coombe, Harriet Fraser, Darrell Hall, Gene Hull, Carlos Jordan, Joe Morlan, Bob O'Brien, Betty Short, Nick Story, Delpha DeTimofeev, Pat Triggs, Ruth Voss, Peter White, and Mike Wihler.

Our most special appreciation goes to the many people who freely gave of their time, effort and expense to lead trips for GGAS. From what we've heard, you found the experience of sharing your knowledge of birds and interesting places rewarding and enjoyable. As Peter Allen, a veteran leader of our field trips, put it so well: "To me, it's a privilege and fun to share what I've learned with others and to help open minds and eyes to what's around us."

Only with your continued active and enthusiastic support will GGAS be able to carry on its successful field trips program. And don't forget, field trips are one of the best ways to win new friends for the Audubon idea: enjoyment, concern, commitment to preserve what we all cherish.

—MARIE MANS, *Field Trips Co-Chairman* 1976-77

A New Service for GGAS Members

A special new service, offering binoculars and spotting scopes at greatly reduced prices, is now available to GGAS members. Because of the special low prices, a supply and delivery time of three to four weeks will be necessary as orders to the manufacturer must be placed in lots of at least 12 items to obtain the low discount prices. For information call the office at 843-2222. These make marvelous graduation and birthday presents.

Finding Rarities at Point Reyes

It has been known for several years that isolated groves of trees on the outer coast porvidc a good isolating mechanism for attracting misoriented vagrants during migration. There is probably no better locality for this than the Point Reycs peninsula in Marin County. It is possible to find rarities anywhere along the coast and even inland during migration, but you increase your chances if you check so-called "vagrant traps" i.e. isolated patches of habitat.

Recent field work indicates that most of the rare land birds which reach our coast in fall are misoricnted and are flying along a migratory path which is a mirror image of their normal route. When these misoriented individuals reach the ocean, they land in the nearest clump of trees to forage before continuing their migration. They are truly vagrants, since they appear to be oriented in a southwesterly direction out into the ocean to certain death at sea. Sometimes they land on ships far off our coast.

SEASONS

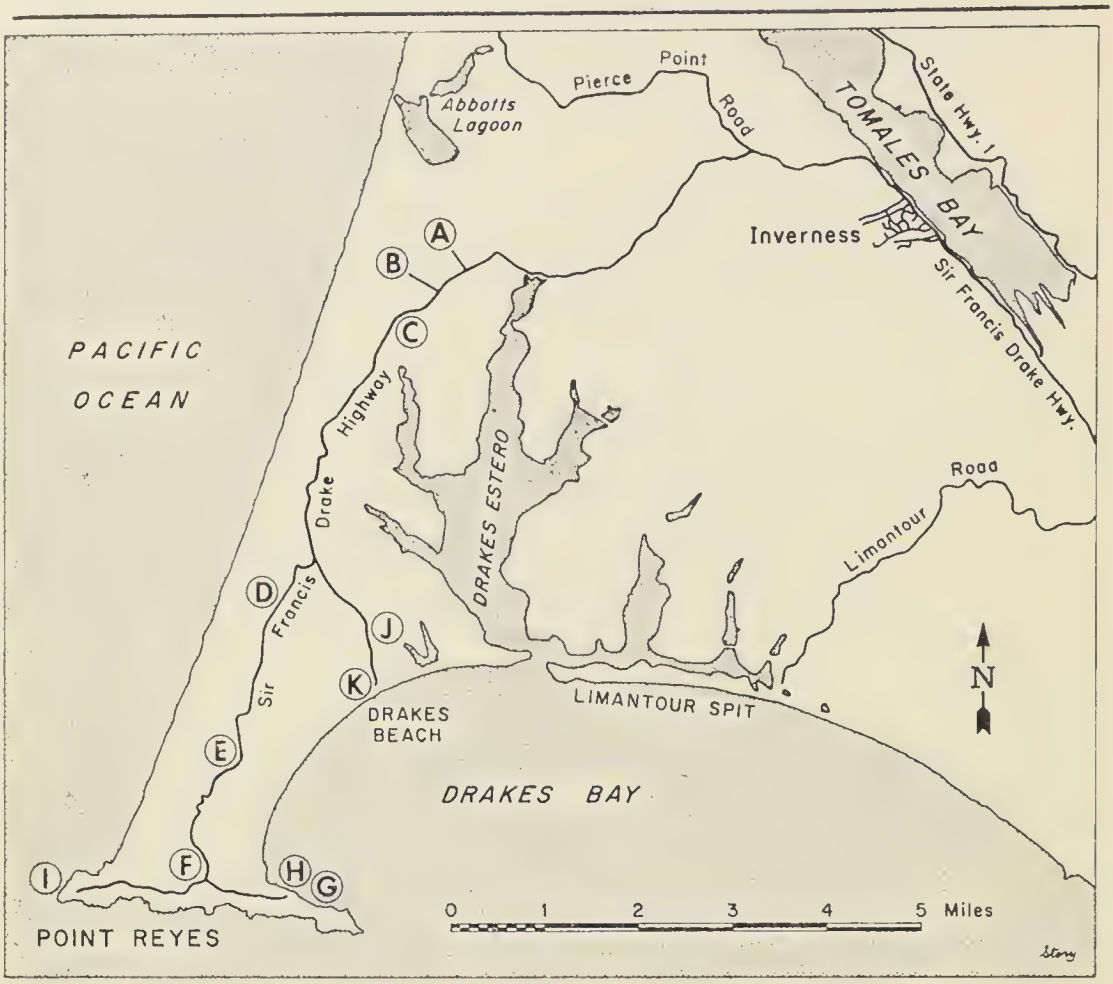
The best time to look is the fall, especially during the months of September and October, with the peak occurring in the last week of September and the first week of October. At this season it is difficult *not* to see some rare or unusual species if one carefully birds Point Reyes.

The spring may be almost as good as the fall. The best time is from late May to late June with the peak in early June. At this time virtually all the common western migrants have passed through and by the second week in June, the only warblers you are likely to see on the outer Point are rare eastern species. Most of these are in full brecding plumage and many are singing!

WEATHER

The relationship between waves of migrants and weather has not been clearly worked out. The best weather conditions for rarities, both in spring and fall, seems to be a high fog overcast on the ocean, hugging the coast, with clear weather inland. Look at a satellite photo. If there is a huge whitc cloud mass over the Pacific, and clear skies inland, head for the coast. This condition is often characterized by strong winds in the Carquinez Straits. The longer this condition persists, the better the birding gets. The passage of fronts along the coast accompanied by a shift of wind to the south often brings in a new set of birds and occasionally a wave.

Clear skies accompanied by high winds over the ocean are usually the worst weather for vagrants, but sometimes birding can be good even under these conditions.



PLACES

The best spots at outer Point Reyes are dairy ranches, where rows of cypress trees have been planted to break the wind near the ranch buildings. Although all this land is now owned by the National Seashore, the provisions of the leases under which the dairy operations continue leave posession of the land to the ranchers. They have the same rights to privacy and to conduct business that you have on your land. Last fall we worked out an agreement with some of the key ranchers so that we could watch birds in the most productive groves of trees.

The following sites are reached by heading northwest from the town of Inverness along Sir Francis Drake Highway:

A. R.C.A. Receiving Station—6.8 miles west of the intersection of Pierce Point Road and Sir Francis Drake Highway. There are two rows of cypress trees leading north along a narrow paved road to the installation. The sign says "No Admission Without Prior Authorization." Park outside and walk in. Birding is permitted at this site, if you do not drive in. The best place is usually the large group of pines at the end of the road. The trees behind the building are off limits.

B. American Tel. and Tel. Overseas Receiving Station—A small installation just west of R.C.A. also on the north side of the road. Drive down the road to the gate. If you wish to go inside it is necessary to make arrangements in advance. Call the Operations Manager at (415) 669-1055 or write AT&T Long Lines, P.O. Box 8, Inverness, CA 94937. It is usually easiest just to walk around the installation, and look in the trees from outside the fence. Permission should be obtained through the phone at the gate. Policy here seems to change often.

C. Abandoned Ranch—Just west of AT&T and just before milepost 35.50 on the south side of the road. There is a stile in the fence and you should park outside and walk down to the grove of trees. There are no buildings here but cattle sometimes sleep under the trees

D. Spaletta Ranch—Milepost 39.39 on the west side of the road. Ask permission at the house to bird the trees behind it. Also check the garden along the road just north of the house and the grove next to the barn on the east side of the road.

E. Mendoza Ranch—Milepost 41.04 on the west side of the road. Check the row of trees thoroughly but the garden and the yards around the ranch complex on the east side of the road are *strictly off limits.* It is O.K. to go through the trees from the other side if you leave all gates the way you found them. There is also a small row of trees just south of here across from the old school house which is O.K. to check.

F. Nunes Ranch—Milepost 42.77. There is a row of trees on the west side of the road just north of the buildings, and there is a gap in the fence. It is O.K. to bird these trees as long as you stay under them within the fence around the trees. *Never* enter the yards around the residences or the residence porches. Cars should not park across the road which leads west off Sir Francis Drake and north of the trees. Cars parked there in the past have caused the cows to follow Sir Francis Drake instead of going into the pasture area. If there is a large number of cars, park near the paved road junction just south of the ranch and then walk back to the bird area. There is a cattle feeding area north of the ranch on the east side of the road, and the area along the road here often has longspurs in fall. It is O.K. to look from the road, but do not enter the field.

G. Fish Docks—Just south of Nunes Ranch, a narrow paved road heads east. There is a sign saying "Chimney Rock." Park at the last parking lot and walk east toward the large house surrounded by trees. It is O.K. to bird this area but stay away from the immediate vicinity of the buildings. Do not enter the yard or garden area. This is the home of a park ranger and his family. Please respect their privacy. There is a short row of pines just east of this house along the road which is usually worth checking.

H. New Willows—Return to the parking lot and head down the road toward the docks. Where the road bends back to the east, take a narrow

trail west to a bluff above the beach. There is a ditch, and usually some water where there are three clumps of scrubby willows, which are sometime good. Species other than those utilizing the cypresses and pines have been found here.

I. Lighthouse—This is scheduled to open to the public in June. There is a row of scrubby windswept cypresses along the road out to the lighthouse, which birders found to be good very early in the mornings years ago, before the light was closed.

J. Hall Ranch—Return to Drakes Beach Road. There is a ranch on the left before you get to the beach. Just southeast of the ranch, there is a stile through the fence providing access to an overgrazed pasture and a small pond. This area is usually good for longspurs in the fall. The trees around the building occasionally have something good, but stay outside the fence.

K. Drakes Beach—There are a few trees around the monument near the northeast corner of the visitor's center parking lot. They have proved to be quite worthwhile in recent years.

ETIQUETTE

It would be helpful if groups would notify the park service when they are coming so that they can advise their rangers as well as the ranchers. With very limited parking, it would be best if car pools were used. Remember not to block any gates when you park and to leave all gates as you found them.

It is important that we maintain good relations with the ranchers and that we police ourselves. If you see any birder inadvertently violating a rancher's privacy, it is your responsibility to inform him, in a nice way, that access to these trees could be revoked by the ranchers at any time if we do not comply with their requests. It is far better for *you* to do this, than for a rancher or park ranger to do so.

Occasionally rarities are found on some of the other ranches. Remember to ask permission before entering any ranch other than the ones discussed above.

STRATEGY

Remember that rare birds, really are rare. They are often tired or sick when they arrive and do not respond to normal methods of birding such as squeaking or "shushing." Go slow! Check every tree and every bird. Listen for the faint chips and seeps of warblers way at the tops of the trees. Do not give up. If there is a bird up there, make sure you have identified it before you go on to the next tree.

Try to get there early and check the best spots first: Mendoza, Nunes, and Fish Docks. If there is nothing at any of these places, there will probably be nothing at any of the other spots. If you find at least one vagrant at each of the three best places, then you are having a very good day, and should check all the spots. Also if you have several species at one spot and none at the others, it is worth checking all the sites just in case. Enjoy yourself. Do not be upset if you do not see anything. If you go out often enough, you will.

DOCUMENTATION

If you do see one of the rarer species, do not keep it to yourself. Try to show it to as many people as you can. There are birders out there nearly every day during migration. Share what you have found. Report your observations as soon as possible to us so that we can put them on the Rare Bird Alert (843-2211). Be prepared to describe the birds in detail, based on notes taken by you in the field.

TURNOVER

Most rarities stay at the point of discovery an average of only two days. Some stay a week, very rarely longer. Many spend a few minutes, leave and are never seen again. The Rare Bird Alert summarizes observations over a week. Do not expect the birds still to be there a week later.

Good Luck. May your spring be filled with vagrants!

—JOE MORLAN, *Compiler* (654-1358)
Northern California Rare Bird Alert

Conservation Notes

When this was written at the end of March (for a 30-day *Gull* deadline) planning was in the final stages for a huge concert and environmental festival to be held in Tokyo, sponsored by the Dolphin Project. The three-day Japanese Woodstock, "Japan Celebrates the Whale and Dolphin," is an international cooperative effort which will focus on the whale killing problem through the media of music, art, lectures, films and exhibits.

This positive alternative to the economic boycott of Japanese products was inspired by the success of "California Celebrates the Whale" which was held in Sacramento last November. Japanese conservation groups and musicians will be joined by Americans; among them will be John Sebastian, Odetta, Joe McDonald, Jimmy Buffett and the Paul Winter Consort in this cross-cultural attempt at international cooperation. There are plans to form a Dolphin Project Japan Foundation to encourage Japanese environmentalists to act from a broader viewpoint, to help save the whales and dolphins and to protect the life of the oceans beyond the barriers of nations.

A ground swell of interest exists in Japan for this event. Japanese students have contributed $80,000 so far. One of the goals is to assemble a group of prominent and eloquent speakers from the realms of science and conservation, such as Jacques Yves Cousteau, Roger Payne and Kenneth Norris. Steve King of "General Whale" has asked us to let him take our whale banner, which was made for "World Whale Day" in 1975, to the exhibit in Tokyo. Money is needed to cover travel expenses, advertising and production costs. If you would like to support this event, which is endorsed by 14 U.S. conservation groups, Senator Mark Hatfield and Gov. Straub of Oregon and Gov. Jerry Brown, send contributions to: Dolphin Project Japan Concert, 54 Mint Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

—CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

NAS Spots on Channel 44

At the request of GGAS, Channel 44 will be showing seven different public service announcements from National Audubon Society on Bald Eagles, hawks, Blue Whales, etc. Watch for them and let us know when they are seen.

Gifts and Bequests

FOR AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

In memory of:

Frances Aviles ..... Lillian Cram, Dixie Sperling
Bernice Boyd ..... Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Ackeret
George C. Harris ..... Margaret Macormack
Grace Costello ..... Margaret Macormack
Estelle Kauffmann ..... Richard Harry, Ronald E. Popp
Priscilla Wheeler ..... W. S. Deeming, Mrs. Shepard Johnson, Gladys W. Cosper

FOR AUDUBON CANYON RANCH LIBRARY FUND

In memory of:

Violet C. Homem ..... Dave and Bix Demaree, Mrs. Paul McCoy

FOR G.G.A.S. BAYSHORE MEMORIAL FUND

The Finance and Executive Committees of GGAS have recommended the formation of a new memorial fund to be used for the acquisition of San Francisco Bay shore line in order to preserve the wildlife habitat. The protection of this shore bird environment is one of the purposes of GGAS; thus we hope that many members will contribute memorial and honorary gifts to this vital cause. At the request of John Jencks the first donations to this fund will be memorials for his father.

In memory of:

Frederick Marshall Jencks ..... John and Claribel Smeltzer, Anne Baeck, Hope Gladding, Ilma B. Oatman, Paul Covel

Attention *Gull* Subscribers

Due to the unpredictable delivery of third class mail, beginning this month you may receive your *Gull* first class if you wish. The cost is $3 additional per year payable to the Golden Gate Audubon Society. This fee is separate from membership dues or the *Gull* subscription fee. In order to simplify our bookkeeping, the $3 shall include *Gulls* received until the current membership expiration date or, in the case of *Gull* subscriptions, until the subscription expiration date. After this initial $3, members must pay $3 extra per year to GGAS and *Gull* subscriptions (for first class only) will be $6.

Bodega Bay Institute

Bodega Bay Institute is a non-profit organization specializing in environmental education. Its trips are led by experienced biologists and naturalists and occur in the field, although some events are preceded by an evening lecture or meeting. Programs range in length from one day or a weekend to several weeks and are offered in a variety of locations—from as close-by as the Bay Area to as far-away as Australia. They are fun, relatively inexpensive and open to the public. Write or call for a free catalog of Institute activities: Bodega Bay Institute, 240 Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123; telephone (415) 776-4449.

60th Anniversary Dinner

Members and friends of Golden Gate Audubon Society are cordially invited to join in the Society's sixtieth anniversary celebration to be held at the Claremont Hotel in the Oakland-Berkeley Hills on Friday, June 17th. A buffet dinner and interesting program are planned.

William Penn Mott, former Director of Parks and Recreation for the State of California and now President of the California State Parks Foundation will be the featured speaker. Phil Schaeffer, Manager of the National Audubon Society's Whittell Education Center and Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary will present a slide program for us. A display table will have snapshots of Golden Gate Audubon activities. If you have any pictures or articles you would like to share with us please call the office.

Tickets will not be sent. Your cancelled check is your receipt. *Please make checks payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society.* RESERVE NOW.

Golden Gate Audubon Society • 60th Anniversary • 1917-1977
Claremont Hotel

Enclosed is my check for $..... for ..... dinners at $10.

Name..... Phone.....

Address .....

Banding Open House at PRBO

There will be a banding open house at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Palomarin Field Station on Sunday, May 22. Mist nets will be up from dawn to afternoon, with hourly banding demonstrations and natural history talks. Come and learn the how and why of banding, and learn some new field marks. Four miles northwest of Bolinas on Mesa Road.

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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to the GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: third Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national $15 per year (individual); $18 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL;* to join, make checks (no cash) payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately $3 per year; single issues 30¢. High school and college student membership $8.50 per year. Senior citizen individual, $12.00; senior citizen family, $15.00.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**